

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A law enforcement vehicle comprising:
  - a camera mounted on the law enforcement vehicle,  
the camera configured to identify a license  
5 plate on a vehicle, and to provide an  
output signal indicative of the identified  
license plate;
  - a processor configured to receive a signal from  
the camera indicative of the identified  
10 license plate, and to compare the received  
signal with a list of stolen vehicle  
license plates;
  - a storage device coupled to the processor, the  
storage device configured to provide to the  
15 processor the list of stolen vehicle  
license plates; and
  - an output device configured to provide an output  
detectable by a law enforcement officer  
indicating that a detected license plate  
20 matches a license plate in the list of  
stolen vehicle license plates.
2. The law enforcement vehicle of claim 1 wherein  
the camera is configured to identify the license  
25 plate on the vehicle while the law enforcement  
vehicle is in motion.

3. The law enforcement vehicle of claim 1 wherein the storage device is further configured to store an image of the vehicle and the license plate of any license plate that matches a license plate in the  
5 list of stolen vehicle license plates.

4. The law enforcement vehicle of claim 1 wherein the output device provides detailed information related to the identified license plate.

10

5. The law enforcement vehicle of claim 1 wherein the output device provides an audible signal to the law enforcement officer.

15 6. The law enforcement vehicle of claim 4 wherein the output device further provides an audible signal to the law enforcement officer.

7. The law enforcement vehicle of claim 1 further  
20 comprising:

a radio transmitter configured to transmit to a central location a signal indicating that the law enforcement vehicle has detected a license plate in the list of stolen vehicle  
25 license plates.

8. The law enforcement vehicle of claim 1 wherein the storage device is further configured to receive an updated list of stolen vehicle license plates.

9. The law enforcement vehicle of claim 1:  
wherein the camera is configured to provide a  
description of the vehicle identified to  
5 the processor;  
wherein the storage device is further configured  
to provide to the processor information on  
the vehicle associated with the identified  
license plate;  
10 wherein the processor is further configured to  
compare the information on the vehicle with  
the identified license plate with the image  
provided by the camera; and  
wherein the output device is further configured  
15 to provide the output signal if the  
information provided does not match the  
image.
10. The law enforcement vehicle of claim 1 further  
20 comprising:  
a plurality of cameras mounted to the law  
enforcement vehicle, each of the cameras  
configured to identify a license plate on a  
vehicle, each of the plurality of cameras  
25 providing a signal to the processor  
indicative of an identified license plate;  
wherein the processor is configured to process  
the signal from each of the plurality of

cameras, and to compare each signal with the list of stolen vehicle license plates.

11. A method of identifying from a law enforcement  
5 vehicle, a vehicle, comprising the steps of:  
capturing an image of the vehicle with at least  
one camera;  
identifying from the image a license plate area;  
determining a character set representative of a  
10 license plate number;  
comparing the determined character set with a  
database of license plate numbers; and  
providing an output indicating that a match is  
found between the character set and the  
15 database.
12. The method of claim 11 further comprising:  
providing an output indicating that a match is  
not found in the database.  
20
13. The method of claim 11 further comprising:  
storing a copy of the image in a database of  
captured images.
- 25 14. The method of claim 11 further comprising:  
updating the database of license plate numbers  
from a central database.

15. The method of claim of claim 11 wherein the database of license plates contains license plates associated with stolen vehicles, and wherein the providing step provides output indicating that the  
5 identified license plate is to a stolen vehicle.

16. The method of claim 11 wherein capturing the image captures the image while the law enforcement vehicle is in motion.

10

17. The method of claim 11 further comprising:  
transmitting from the law enforcement vehicle to  
a central station information related to an  
identified vehicle that matches a license  
15 plate in the database of license plates.